1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

the death of Kemal Yar Jung the property came under the administration of the Court of Wards. In the meantime, vast changes were taking place in Hyderabad. After the Police Action of 1948, Hyderabad became an integral part of the Indian Republic. With the inauguration of the democratic order the Nizam has become a constitutional ruler and the feudal system within the State has been abolished. In consequence Shamirpet now comes under the jurisdiction of the normal district administration.

Shamirpet is situated at a distance of about a furlong from the north-bound road which runs between Hyderabad and Karimnagar. An unmetalled road links the village with the main road, from which some of the houses in the village are clearly visible. Between the road and the village there is a flat and fairly level patch of ground, and in the centre of this ground there is a tree around which the Muslims bury their dead. At the junction of the main road and the diversion leading to the village there is a small shelter for passengers awaiting the buses, built in stone and lime. A little way down to the north stands the Inspection Bungalow of the State Public Works Department. It is intended for the use of touring government officials, and can also be used by occasional visitors, who have to make a small payment for its use. Further north, at a distance of about two and a half furlongs, is the tank, which in its setting of barren rocks and tall trees provides a beautiful landscape. Between the tank and the road now lie the ruins of the 'summer house' which was built on the tank-bund by the last feudal landlord of the village. In his time it was provided with an electric generator, pipe lines and modern sanitary fittings, but after the Nawab's death it was deserted and is now a melancholy but romantic sight.

The village itself is not built according to a definite plan. A wide main street lies in the centre and runs almost parallel to and roughly a furlong away from the main road. As we proceed northwards down this street we find on the right a number of whitewashed stone buildings housing the various government offices, and on the left there are a number of small tea and betel shops. On the right there are also the residential quarters of the sub-inspector of police who is in charge of the police station, a government granary, living quarters of the police constables, the village dispensary, the school and the post office. Lanes branch off both right and left from the street, and on either side of these lanes are

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595 investigations. Their social system and usage permit divorce, and
586 clauses pertaining to alimony are embodied in the written marriage contract. In actual practice, in all cases of desertion and 'running away' these conditions are not adhered to very strictly, and compensation when paid is substantially less than the figure mentioned
585 in the contract. As pointed out earlier the marriage rites are conducted by the *kazi*, who is invited from the city for this purpose.

761 *Death.* Both Hindus and Muslims understand the physiological causes of death. It is generally attributed to natural causes, such as disease or old age; but in all cases where the circumstances or manner of death are unusual it is attributed to supernatural factors, such as wrath of gods and ancestor-spirits, witchcraft and black magic.

● 764 Among all the Hindu castes, the dead children are buried. The Brahmin and the Komti as a rule cremate their dead, except in cases of death from snake-bite and smallpox. Among the other higher castes both cremation and burial are practised. It is usual to cremate the aged as well as the rich and the influential. In the lower castes such as the Sakali, the Mangali and the Erkala, as well as among the untouchable Malas and Madigas, burial is more common. Soon after a death, word is sent round to relations and friends in the village and also in the neighbouring villages. The corpse is washed, clothed and tied on to a wooden or bamboo bier. It is covered with a new cloth, and decorated with flowers. If the family can afford it Madigas are called to play their musical instruments, which they do walking at the head of the procession. The bier is carried by four people on their shoulders. As they proceed slowly towards the graveyard or the cremation ground, people keep on repeating some solemn slogans, such as 'the name of God alone is true' or 'be truthful and your salvation will be assured'. When a person is to be cremated, his or her son, or in the absence of a son a younger brother or some other near kin, carries an earthen pot with fire in it. Midway between the house and the burial ground the bier is placed on the earth for a few minutes' 'rest', and then carried on. Before putting it on the funeral pyre or in the grave, the son, or a near relation of the deceased, goes round the pyre (or grave) three times sprinkling water all around it. The body is then put on the pyre with the bier, or is taken from it and put in the grave. A near kinsman sets fire to the pyre, or

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puts a few handfuls of earth in the grave. In the case of a burial all persons present at the spot take a hand in filling the grave. When the pyre is burnt half-way, or when the grave is filled up, the people return home, bathing on the way. 764

What happens to the soul of the dead? If the death is on an auspicious day and time, the soul goes straight to the Supreme Being; ordinarily it hovers round the house—mainly on the roof, above the main entrance—for eleven to thirteen days. This is the stereotype description; but further analysis reveals a rather diffused belief-pattern: (i) near the place of burial or cremation the person dwells in a ghost-like form; (ii) the soul goes to God, where according to the deeds of the deceased in his life-time it is sent to heaven or hell; (iii) it takes re-birth, often within a few days of the death—as a human being or in some other species; (iv) it can be called back through prescribed ritual to reside with the other ancestor-spirits in the house. Some of these explanations appear to be contradictory, but people believe in them all at once. 775

On the third day after death the first purificatory rites take place, involving the cleansing of the house, washing of all household linen and clothes, and the throwing away of all earthen pots used for cooking or for storing water. On the eleventh or thirteenth day further purificatory rites are performed which remove the ritual impurity of members of the household. On this day food and water are offered to the soul of the deceased, near relations have a hair-cut and bath (on the death of the father or mother all the hair on the head as well as moustache and beard must be shaved) and a feast is given. Among the higher castes a Brahmin belonging to one of the nearby villages comes and conducts the rites on this day; others follow their own caste customs. These higher castes collect the bones from the cremation ground and immerse them in a holy river—generally in the Godavari, which is the nearest to Shamirpet, but in exceptional cases in the Ganges, which is regarded as the holiest of all rivers by the Hindus all over India. As pointed out earlier, in the Petramasa fortnight water is offered to the ancestor-spirits; and during the first Petramasa after death the soul of the deceased is invited to 'come back' and is lodged with the spirits of the other ancestors in one corner of the house. 768 765 769

Abnormal deaths require a special treatment. A woman dying 000

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Abnormal deaths ... special treatment. A woman dying
766 in pregnancy, a young man dying without sexual satisfaction, or a person dying without having satisfied any of his deep cravings, will all experience difficulty in their rehabilitation in the supernatural world, and their souls will keep on returning to the world
[775] of the living periodically. These are the persons who often turn into ghosts, reside permanently in the village and create difficulties in the normal life of the community. To undo their evil special skills must be employed.

764 Muslim death customs differ from those of the Hindus. The toes of the corpse are tied together with a cord; and a small bundle of salt is placed on the stomach to prevent its swelling. Friends and relations gather together and make preparations for the funeral. A new cloth, to cover the body, is bought, and the communal wooden box used for carrying the dead to the graveyard is requisitioned. The corpse of a man is covered with three pieces of cloth; that of a woman with five pieces. Camphor powder is sprinkled on the forehead, eyes, palms and legs of the deceased. It is customary to sprinkle some perfume also. Relations and friends have a last look at the deceased, and then put the corpse in the wooden box. The box is lifted by four men, and carried to the mosque by the male relations and friends. As they go, people keep on repeating, 'There is no god except Allah'. Funeral prayers are said there, and the procession resumes its journey towards the graveyard. The corpse is put in the grave, passages from the Koran are read, and then the grave is filled up. All those who accompany the bier put some earth in the grave, reciting passages from the Koran. When this has been done, all step forty paces from the burial place, and return to it again saying prayers (*fatiha*) for
[illegible] the deceased and invoking the Almighty's blessings for him. For two days after the death 'there must be no fire in the hearth', and food for the bereaved family is sent by near relations. On the third day prayers are said in the mosque and, later, flowers are placed on the grave by the relations of the deceased. This is done on the tenth day also. On the fortieth day all those who have participated in the funeral assemble together. Prayers are said again, and some people go to lay flowers on the grave. This is followed by a dinner. On the occasion of the death anniversary, flowers are again laid on the grave, prayers said, and a dinner is given in memory of the deceased.

443 where they could sit and deal in their goods. The anxiety of Panchayats to auction their market receipts to the highest bidder would never go further enough to make them realise their concomittant responsibilities for this fruitful source of income and those who contributed to it. The sheds were provided for in Attili and Akividu in West Godavari, Razole in East Godavari, and Dharmavaram in Anantapur. These were only rare exceptions rather than the rule in each and every district. If that was the situation in major Panchayats, the minor Panchayats could not naturally do more.

●764 **Burning and Burial Grounds—Construction and Maintenance :** Practically very few Panchayats seemed to be doing anything towards this obligation. Except in a few places like, Tanuku and Bhimavaram in West Godavari, and Amalapuram in East Godavari, most of the other Panchayats did not reveal recurrent attention or expenditure on this item which was one of their obligatory duties.

While informal enquiries made in Panchayats visited, revealed an abiding interest in this matter, there was no regular expenditure incurred on this item. None of the Panchayats usually provided pendals or some erections to give shade to those who had to go there. Neither the Panchayats nor their supervisory staff ever seemed to have insisted on the careful observance of this obligation.

365 **Night Lighting in Streets :** Provision of lights for the convenience of the passers-by in the streets in villages was done in most of the Panchayats. They were either kerosene or petromax, gas or electric lights. Where there was no electricity, the number of lights compared to pre-war times had been less. Except in some places where either the Panchayat was superseded or the Panchayat was in no way able to meet this obligation, the lighting facilities were always provided either it was a 1st, 2nd or 3rd grade Panchayat. The situation in the minor Panchayats was a bit different and most of them were not able to provide this facility, not so much because they could not afford it, but beacuse there was no effective power to enforce this obligation.

The following table gives the numbet of lights now used and existed prior to the rationing of kerosene oil.

auctioned, while Government wanted them to be departmentally managed. 231

Parks for the public recreation were constructed only in a few Panchayats while the majority were indifferent. 367

Similarly market sites where fees were collected on sale of vegetables, grains or animals were mostly without stalls or sheds to shelter the sellers and buyers and the goods offered for sale. 443

Burning and burial grounds were not properly maintained either in the major or minor Panchayats. 764

Street lighting undertaken only by a few major Panchayats was left mostly to contractors who would light the streets hardly for a few hours. Panchayats did not undertake this task directly as they thought it was difficult to control and check the pilfering of kerosene oil, lights, wicks, burners, chimneys, etc. The remedy for that would be to get standardised and stamped goods for the use of Panchayats from Government Stores and to punish offenders mercilessly than to leave this function to the mercy of the contractors who would only be keen to charge the highest rates than giving proper service. 365

Provision of libraries and newspapers was undertaken only by very few Panchayats either due to lack of funds or sufficient interest. 217

Management of fairs and festivals was done by a few minor or major Panchayats, but, without exploiting their privileged position by means of a pilgrim tax or a tax on the vendors. 543

Optional functions like plantation of trees, provision of cart and bus stands, radio sets for listeners, help in epidemics, provision of dispensaries, etc. were done only by very few Panchayats. 623

The attendance of the members at the meetings of Panchayats was so irregular that there was often no quorum. Sometimes the Panchayats held no meetings at all for a long time or the members absented themslves continuously without any action being taken against them.

Panchayats were superseded and special officers were appointed to administer them for a year or two, when Panchayats could not work properly either due to local factions or opposition to taxation or any other undesirable features. Fresh Panchayat was ushered in only after the prevailing irregularities were removed and when the prospects of its smooth working were tolerably certain. 687 623